(c) The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 seeks to protect the interests of workers in the unorganised/sweated sector including agricultural workers. The minimum rates of basic agricultural wages in the Central sphere which were in the range of Rs. 26 to Rs. 58 per day in 1992 have been revised upward in the range of Rs. 67 to Rs. 101 per day vide Gazette Notification No. 1085 (E) dated 11-11-99. There is also a provision for variable dearness allowance (linked to consumer price index) which is revised from time to time and added to basic minimum wages.

Negative Growth in Employment

4193. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is fact that there has been negative growth in employment in the public sector and a sharp decline in employment in the private sector during the last three years;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for this; and

(c) what action Government have taken/propose to take to enhance the generation of employment both in the public and private sectors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL) : (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The primary objective of the Ninth Plan is to generate greater productive employment in the growth process itself by concentrating on sectors, sub-sectors and technologies which are more labour intensive in regions characterised by higher rate of unemployment and under employment.

A Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr. M.S. Ahluwalia, Member, Planning Commission has also been set up to look into the employment generation taking place and suggest measures to generate at least one hundred million jobs in a period of 10 years (Ten million jobs in each year).

Handicapped persons registered in Employment Exchanges

4194. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of handicapped persons registered in different Employment Exchanges of Tamil Nadu till December, 1999;